

INTRODUCTION

In the Subtitle to this Report the **Composition and Terms of Reference** of the **Joint Select Committee on Human Rights, Diversity, the Environment and Sustainable Development** was recorded for ease of reference. **MAVAW's** **Terms of Rererence** is derived from this Committee's **FIRST INQUIRY**, quoted immediately below.

- i) Describe the various programmes and services offered by you organization. Are there any services for families and children? Are there any services available for men?
- ii) What are the major challenges facing your programmes and services related to domestic violence?
- iii) What are the major achievements of your programmes and services related to domestic violence?
- iv) Are the staff of your organisation adequately trained to handle domestic violence cases?
- v) Is there an adequate level of security available at your organisation?
- vi) Does your organisation possess a confidentiality policy to safeguard victims of domestic violence?
- vii) Does your organisation provide outreach services/follow up services in communities?
- viii) Has anything been done to encourage male victims of domestic violence to come forward?
- ix) Has anything been done to change the stigma that only women are victims of domestic violence?
- x) Could you describe/outline the process for treating with a domestic violence case?
- xi) What has been your organization's experience on the impact of domestic violence on the family and children?

- xii) Do stakeholders meet on a regular basis to discuss programmes and services regarding domestic violence?
- xiii) Do the stakeholders share information and collaborate on plans and actions and programmes in order to ensure no duplicity and waste of resources?
- xiv) What is required to improve the level of support for victims of domestic violence?
- xv) What are the sources of income that provide support for the operationalization of your services/programmes?

The above mentioned **15 Focus areas** will be expanded in the **Body** of the document, where not identified elsewhere in the **Report**. Most importantly, **MAVAW** having been actively involved with and fully participating in the **Violence Reduction Movement** since 1994, a period of **21 years and 5 months** to date, providing experienced **counselling, support and developmental research**, free in most instances; our submission is comprehensive and involves a discussion on the 3 Levels of **Sustainable Development**, the **Micro Level**, the **Mezzo Level** and the **Macro Level**, already mentioned in our **Executive Summary** and fuelled by our first outreach presentation in 1994, **The Ripple Effect Theory**, giving full appreciation and value to the fact that everything impacting in/on the **Family Environment**, negative or positive, eventually **ripples** into the **Immediate Community** and finally into the **National Community**.

Sustainable development is a process for meeting human development goals while sustaining the ability of natural systems to continue to provide the natural resources and ecosystem services upon which the economy and society depend. While the modern concept of sustainable development is derived most strongly from the 1987 Brundtland Report, it is rooted in earlier ideas about sustainable forest management and twentieth century environmental concerns.

Sustainable development is the organizing principle for sustaining finite resources necessary to provide for the needs of future generations of life on the planet. It is a process that envisions a desirable future state for human societies in which living conditions and resource-use continue to meet human needs without undermining the "integrity, stability and beauty" of natural biotic systems. (Wikipedia)

To fully understand **Violence In Society**, especially **Violence Against Women**, it has to be placed in a holistic context, which encompasses the **Physical, Psychological and Spiritual** aspects of our existence as human beings, in this God created space and the lifestyles of men and women, individually and in relationships, with themselves and with others, both significant and casual and the environment.

God's **Primary** gifts to us, as children of God, every single son and daughter, born to humankind, can be listed as the **3 P's Opportunities**:-

- **Procreation**
- **Protection**
- **Provision**, in any order, being involved in any one or more than one, each to his/her own choice and level of personality development.

The most poignant and long lasting example of the **resistance** to this violence, has been seen by the life and death of Jesus Christ, the first man over 2,000 years ago, who chose to believe in his spiritual and physical connection to God as a Parent, prepared for and died a painful death, thereby saving his earthly mother, Mary, from an even more painful death, as an adulterous, promiscuous woman of that time, which was a public stoning, until death.

In addition to this example of **resistance**, we also recorded the first **3-Point Separation**, of the type of abuse, which occurs in all instances, i.e.

- **Direct Abuse** (to the individual)
- **Indirect Abuse** (to their loved ones)
- **Spiritual Abuse** (disrespect for spiritual belief to all others).

The **First Limitation** we have to contend with, in understanding **Violence In Society**, is the fact that, **Violence is acceptable** in 2 situations, i.e.

- In **Combat Mode** (war)
- In **Self Defence Mode**, but only when the **4** following conditions exist, i.e.
 - The threat to you is **immediate**.
 - You must be in genuine **fear** of an attack.
 - You **cannot escape** from the threat.
 - The **force** you use to defend yourself must be **reasonable**.

To further contextualize **Violence In Society** and its consequent **resistance** to and/or **Movement For Change**, which can be viewed in **3 Phases**, i.e.

- **Phase One—The First Movement**, which was mainly social in nature, radical in action and focusing only on **Direct Violence** to women, being perpetrated only by men, very Gender Biased in practice.
- **Phase Two—The Second Movement**, introduced **Domestic Violence Legislation** and was therefore social and legal in nature, persistent in action, attempting to achieve **Gender Neutrality** and accepting **Indirect** as well as **Direct Violence**, happening in **Relationships**, at one and the same time.
- **Phase Three—The Third Movement**, the place where we are now, where **Gender Based Violence** is the subject head, where biological, sociological, spiritual and age determinants, impact on solutions, where we are decisive about a **Gender Neutrality** going

towards mainstreaming in rules, procedures, policies and practices, where **Models for Violence In Relationships**, are **Gender Neutral** in nature and **Models** for top management in societies are **Gender Equitable** in nature, where a **Parliament**, maybe the First one in the world, has a **Joint Select Committee on Human Rights, Diversity, the Environment and Sustainable Development**, inquiring into the programmes and services which provide support to victims of **Domestic Violence** and with the **Terms of Reference** of this **Committee**, very forward looking to say the least and a Best Practice Democratic Policy to say the most, notwithstanding, the genuine attempt to achieve a **Gender Equitable Composition** in its nature, 6 men and 4 women, with a woman as the Chairman. A job well done.

As a consequence of the developmental work done in the discipline of Architecture, in an effort to improve Shelter and Settlement Development, including **Violence Reduction**, the natural progression was to use psycho-social learning from research, in a vehicle best suited for outreach and consequently the Organization MAVAW.

THIS IS A BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE ORGANIZATION MAVAW.

Men Against Violence Against Women (MAVAW), could be considered to have had a Natural Birth, in that it was a man's idea, put forward and accepted at a forum to deal with rising crime in 1994, hosted by a Feminist Organization, called **The National Women's Caucus (NWC)**. Said idea was to have a **Crime Committee** made up of **concerned men** in society, focusing on **violent male behaviour** and **developing strategies to reduce and eventually stop this male behaviour**.

After functioning for about **nine months** within The National Women's Caucus, the Crime Committee developed into the organization **"Men Against Violence Against Women"** and thereafter, **MAVAW** became an active participant in the **"Men's Movement"**, joining the fifty (50) year old International Men's Movement and the budding Caribbean

Movement, which was **started in Jamaica in 1991**, with the **Fathers' Incorporated Organization**.

MAVAW is a **Proactive way** to take responsibility for **Male Violence** and to contribute towards the creation of a Violent Free Society, i.e. --

1. It puts **Concerned men to Work** and to identify with **Problem Solving**.
2. It allows men trying to **Change**, to achieve **Success**, by **Working** to help others.
3. It tries to reach men in **Denial**, who still live in **Violent Relationships**, by offering them **Support** and a way out.

MAVAWISM therefore, is the ***Pursuit of Equal Rights with Consequent Appreciation for the Differences between the Sexes, Utilizing the Principle of Equity and with an Accent on Bringing Paternal Care back into the Home wherever it is Lacking.***

MAVAW's MISSION is ***to reduce in the first instance and eventually eradicate unacceptable violence in society, with an emphasis on Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women, using a multi-disciplinary approach, focusing on correcting behaviour skill and belief system deficits.***

MAVAW REGISTERED as a ***Non-Profit Company (M 1799 95)*** in August of **1998** and has **three (3) First Directors**, namely: -

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1. CHRISTOPHER HOLDER | POLICE OFFICER | CHAIRMAN. |
| 2. DONALD BERMENT | HOUSING SPECIALIST | SECRETARY. |
| 3. DESMOND PERSAD | ACCOUNTANT | TREASURER. |

Fiscal Year—1st July—to—30th June.

Over the period **February 1994 to date—July 1999**, **MAVAW** has recorded **381 Outreach Activities/Efforts**, spanning the full spectrum of **Social Activism**, the most high profile are: --

1. Campaign to have our **Annual Male Awareness Week in December** and our **Annual Fathers' Week in June**, declared International Events on the United Nations Calendar.
2. Promotion of an **Annual Gender Sensitive Calypso Competition**, in order to make full use of our major Cultural Entertainment Season, in our Quest for a Violent Free Society.
3. Campaign to build the **First Transitional Home For Men** In Change Mode.

The **Constitution** of **MAVAW** is on the attached CD with this Report, along with the other relevant documents describing **MAVAW**, its work and answering the 15 questions in our **Terms of Reference**.

HERE ARE A FEW HISTORY MILESTONES OF MAVAW.

1994 Presentation of the **Ripple Effect Theory (RET)** on Crime at the Chamber of Commerce National Consultation on Crime, held in the Queen's Hall.

Sat on a **Committee** to support Senator Diana Mahabir Wyatt's Presentation to the Senate on the Unremunerated Work Bill.

1995 Presentation of a **3—Line Paper on Domestic Violence**, in Room 101, UWI's Engineering Building, said paper promoting the concept of **Full Cycle Human Resource Management**.

Holistic support to then Member of Parliament **Ms. Hulsie Bhaggan**, for 1 year, because she was alleging that **Psychological violence** was being done to her.

1996 Review and recommendations submitted to the Ministry of Housing and Settlements, on our **Country's Report**, to the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul, Turkey.

Initiating the **First Male Awareness Week** in December, in

collaboration with the then **Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs.**

Other information on CD.

1997 Sat on a Cabinet Appointed Ad Hoc Committee, to review the **1991 Domestic Violence Act** and to make recommendations to correct the problems, experienced by persons using said Act.

First ever **Fathers Week Celebrations**, held in June, with co-host **Power 102 FM Radio.**

Other information on CD.

1998 Attended the International Association of Community Police Officers (**IAPCRO's**) 27th Annual Training Conference at the Trinidad Hilton, titled Embracing the Youth Through Community Policing and delivered a presentation titled **The Game of Violence and the Youth Psyche.**

Celebrated the **2nd Annual Fathers Week**, with a Father's Fiesta Exhibition on Brian Lara Promenade, co-hosted with the newly formed **Fathers Who Care**, non governmental group.

Other information on CD.

1999 Promotion of the First ever **Gender Sensitive Calypso Competition**, in order to introduce a new challenge to our local artists, utilizing our major cultural entertainment season.

Planning the publication and distribution of a 65 page **Domestic Violence Awareness Handbook**, edited by our first Chairman, Police Officer Christopher, which was distributed in 2002 and now revised in PDF format on the CD and in our Cloud Archive [www.archive .org](http://www.archive.org). Type **donald berment** and **mavaw** in search boxes.

I left Trinidad to go Canada in November. During my stay, completed a 5-month developmental research project titled Violence Reduction Strategies in a Large Multicultural, Racially/Tribally Diverse Country—again using the **RET Model**. Also planned with the **White Ribbon Campaign** Team, their first ever **Dad Walk**, which is celebrated annually on the 15th June, this year being their 15th.

Other information on CD.

2000 Spent 6 months in an Urban Environment, Eastside Plaza, Charlotte Street, preparing and collecting preliminary data for a study titled **Examining The Role of Intimacy and Violence in Spousal relationships and its Impact on Poverty in an Urban Environment**. Lack of funds prohibited full development of this project, which had 3 components.

Attended the **2nd International Men's Day Celebration** at Palms Club, San Fernando, on Sunday the 19th day of November. This day is now celebrated worldwide; go to the site below for data.

www.internationalmensday.org.

Celebrated UN World Aids Day, giving a 3 day Lecture Series, to the Form 1-3 students at Curepe Junior Secondary School.

Other information on CD.

2001 Desktop published the book **Parenting Without Tears**, a 2 part handbook which teaches how to bring up children without the introduction of violence in their lives, which is on the CD and our Cloud archive and a Healthy Relationships Curriculum, by Canadians.

2002 Distributed our Domestic Violence Awareness Handbook to every Judge and Master of the High Court, Justice of the Peace, Magistrates, Libraries, Parliamentarians, Media Houses, many NGO's

Calyptonians, to name a few.

Proposed the implementation of the **Healthy Relationships Curriculum** in all Primary and Secondary schools, with a request to the **UWI Guild of Students** to consider its use on Campus, either in the standard curriculum of all courses and or a mandatory course for Guild members. Our DV Handbook is also there, available to all.

2003 introduced the **BSD Syndrome Concept**, a **Gender Neutral Model** to analyze behaviour in dysfunctional relationships, the future in our view, of Domestic Violence analysis and discussion and as an alternative to the much used **Duluth Model**, which has been heavily condemned, in some quarters and started a **Bumper Sticker Programme**, using our most poignant One Liners, courtesy **ICHRIS Industries Ltd.**

Sat on a Cabinet Appointed Multi-Disciplinary Committee, agreed to in June 2003, to examine the **Status of the Institution of the Family in Trinidad and Tobago** at the Ministry of Social Development and submitted our Report in August 2004

The rest of the years to date will be detailed in the body of our Report. Suffice it to say that the most important **Laws**, which need a closer examination, are as follows:-

- **The Domestic Violence Act, 1999** to make it fully **Gender Neutral** and empower **Domestic Violence Counsellors**, approved by Parliament or the relevant Ministry, to play a more active role in the resolution of **Domestic Violence** matters. At present, DV Counsellors can only appear in Court when they are required to present a report on matters before the Magistrate. This will be further explained later.
- The **Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago** is in

Contravention of **Article 6** of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** namely:-

Article 6.

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

When no mention of the female gender is made throughout its content. In addition, the opportunity to bring more young persons to the political environment can be enhanced by lowering the age to be a **President** and a **Senator**. Of course a **Gender Equitable Parliament Model** is yet to be considered by all and sundry...Explained later and on the CD as my **2013 Suggestions for Constitutional Reform**.

- The **Liquor Licence Act, Chapter 84.10**, Part V of the Act, Powers of Licensees, Sect 35 Subsection (1) which reads:-

The authority given to any person by any licence in respect of any premises shall extend in respect of such premises, to his servant, or his wife, a member of his family resident with him.

At present, throughout the 8 Licencing Districts, wives, family members and servants/agents of Licence Holders, approximately **80,000 persons**, cannot appear before Magistrates at Liquor Licence Hearings. This has been challenged since February 2014 and not yet opinioned by the **Solicitor General**. Further explained and shown as Gender Based Violence by a State Institution.

- The **National Insurance Board** is having great difficulty providing **timely benefits** when due and this after a claim of over **15 Billion in assets**. This explained in detail in the body of the Report is **Gender Based Violence**.

- At present persons, **60 years and over**, receiving **pensions** in excess of \$5,000 per month, still have to pay tax on this hard earned income after already paying tax during their work life. In addition, if such persons are employed again in any State or private Institution, their pension is considered income and added to the current salary. This is **Financial Abuse** and impacts on the behaviour in relationships. My **recommendation** is for the approval by **Cabinet** that all pensions, totaling \$15,000, shall not be considered income for annual tax return compilation, making it applicable to persons over 60 years of age, requiring a change in level of **Personal Allowances** for said persons.
- Finally, having served as the **Personal Assistant** to a **Minister and Member of Parliament** for 4 years and 4 months, I have seen the need to equip these hard working members of society with enough **Support Staff** to them so that they can function at maximum efficiency. In addition, there seems to be problem also with staffing at the Comptroller of Accounts, as reports of long wait for Gratuity Payments is another type of **Gender Based Violence** by Institutions.

This Report is structured to give **Title, Subtitle, Executive Summary, Table of Contents, Introduction, the Body Explanation and Conclusion** with the consequent **Appendices**.

A **CD** will be supplied providing **PDF data** on the relevant matters discussed along with the **Introductions** of **Dr. Russell Foote, Donald Berment and Dr. Robert Moultrie**. Email versions of all and sundry is also being sent to the **Secretary of the Joint Select Committee**.